



# RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF NORTH EAST INDIA: A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BUDDHISM

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## ABSTRACT

The mountainous area of north-east India has borders with Bangladesh, China, Bhutan, and Myanmar. The Brahmaputra Valley in this area is connected to the Indian mainland through a tiny channel. In the plains and hills of India's North East reside several ethnic groups with various socio-cultural and religious identities. Tribal faiths such as Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Shaktism, Jainism, Buddhism, Tantrism, and more have all thrived here throughout history. As seen by the exquisitely painted Buddhist monasteries, stupas, and other tiny Buddhist structures, as well as the regional arts and crafts, rituals, festivals, and dances, Buddhism has played a distinctive role in the religious culture of north-east India. Buddhism is still actively practiced in a number of localities. The major goal of this research paper is to examine the religious practices and beliefs of north-eastern India, with special reference to Buddhism. The goal of the current study is to investigate the theoretical underpinnings of comprehending Buddhism from a religious perspective and analyse the theoretical foundation for the study of its religious beliefs and practices in North-East India.

**KEYWORDS:** North East India, Buddhism, Religious Beliefs and Practices.

## INTRODUCTION

The easternmost region is North East India, which is connected to east India through a tiny passageway crammed between Bangladesh and Nepal. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and the Himalayan state of Sikkim are among the contiguous Seven Sister states that hold special significance in India because of their location as well as their cultural, historical, and religious diversity. These states stand apart from other regions of the nation due to their terrain, variety of communities, and geographical and biological diversity. They are referred to as "seven sisters" and "one brother." These states, which are surrounded by hills and stunning rivers, are comprised of valley plains, Patkai-Naga hills, the eastern Himalayan Mountains, and the Brahmaputra-Barak river systems. Mountain ranges, plateaus, low hills, and valleys are all present in the hills and basins. The area is a gateway to east and south-east Asia and is rich in natural resources, vegetation, and animals.

The states are a great illustration of unity in diversity since they have diverse ethnic groups and varied cultural traditions. The diversity of ethnic groups, tongues, and faiths reflects the state's multicultural nature. Tribal people predominately live in states like Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland, and there is some degree of variety among the tribes. Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, and a variety of indigenous tribes and ethnicities may all be found living in states like Assam, Manipur, Tripura, and Sikkim.

It is crucial to note right now that each state has played a significant role in Indian history, socio-culture, and religious aspects. The eastern boundary that touches Tibet, China, and

Southeast Asia, like western and central Asia, has significantly influenced India's history. 1 Many ethnic groups with unique socio-cultural and religious identities live in the area, both in the plains and the hills. Through the millennia, tribal faiths including Saivism, Saktism, Vaishnavism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Tantrism have thrived in this region. Buddhism has played a special role in the religious culture of north-eastern India, which is seen in the beautifully painted Buddhist monasteries, stupas, and other Buddhist small structures, as well as in local rituals, festivals, and dances.2

## OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The main objective of this research paper is to explore and make a general assessment of the religious beliefs and practices of North East India, with special reference to Buddhism. The study is a concept-based, philosophical inquiry. Initially, it aims to provide a conceptual description of the religious practices and beliefs of Buddhism among the people of North-East India. Secondly, the study attempts to translate the theoretical constructions that it descriptively lined up with the religious understanding of Buddhism in North East India. Therefore, methodologically, the present study resorts to conceptual assessment grounded on textual description and interpretation.

## Discussions

### A Brief sketch of Major religions of North East India

The four religions practiced in north-east India are Buddhism, Christianity, Jainism, and Hinduism. The Hindu religion lacks a clear founder and a fixed beginning date. Another name for Hinduism is "Sanatan Dharma," which means "eternal order." Hinduism is therefore said to have been transmitted to humans through immortality. The majority of Hindus consider either

one or several gods and goddesses to exist.

The Buddhist conception of God is different from the Hindu conception. They never claim that God exists or does not. Buddha never speaks about these kinds of conversations. Buddhism might be described as a godless religion. Buddhism is a religion that is only concerned with humans. Again, Jainism is a religion that is only concerned with humans. They never focus on the notion that God is everything. It is also a non-theistic religion, just like Buddhism. It does not, however, downplay holiness or godliness. They hold that each and every freed soul is a deity. The existence of God is not required to explain how the world came to be. Rather than being governed by external principles like God, the universe is governed by its own inherent rules. Again, Christianity is monotheistic in its conception of God. They acknowledge that there is only one supreme God. Hinduism views God as infinite, almighty, omnipresent, and omniscient, in contrast to Buddhism and Jainism. Furthermore, God is viewed by the majority of tribal faiths as the force of nature. Certain indigenous societies strongly believe in the presence of spirits, and they revere and honour various spirits that are comparable to deities.

### **Buddhism as Religion**

While Buddhist religion is in some ways a component of the larger Indian Civilization, it also goes beyond any solely naturalistic culture or religion. That is as a result of its unique but real spiritualism. Religion has a natural and a spiritual beginning, just like man. In actuality, a person's religious life is a result of his or her spiritual desires acting within the constrained yet tunable circuits of their or their instinctive or natural existence. Spiritual culture is allegedly more global and mindful of its universality than other types of culture. Of all the traditional spiritual traditions, Buddhism is in some ways the most global. It was unafraid to accept the verbal and material forms of religion that were popular in the cultures where it occurred to spread. As a result, Buddhist writings were easily produced in Tibetan, Mongolian, and Chinese, and they were considered completely authoritative.

The new trend that the Buddha began in Indian culture has finally evolved into a crucial component of global civilization. The fundamental moral and spiritual teachings of the Lord Buddha continued an ancient religious and cultural tradition and served as the impetus for a variety of developments. These developments included the establishment of a high and refined moral ideal that encouraged charitable activities among the laity and ascetic renunciation and mystical contemplation, especially among monks and nuns, as well as the production of truly remarkable literary, artistic, and educational works. What has been referred to as the Buddhist religion is really a well-defined worldview<sup>3</sup> that was initially unique to the Sramanic tradition, moral and ascetic principles, religious institutions and practices, works of art and literature, and educational and intellectual pursuits influenced by Sakyamuni's teachings. One of the world's oldest religions, Buddhism is also one of the most recent humanistic disciplines devoted to the diligent search for human knowledge.

Burnt offering sacrifices given to thirty-three gods known as devas were the main emphasis of the time's prevalent religious practices, which at least date back a thousand years. Only Brahmin priests were thought to be pure enough to offer these sacrifices. To cleanse oneself prior to each sacrifice, they have created a vast variety of esoteric practices. These practices are based on a number of elements of what is now known as yoga, including rigorous meditation practice, fasting, celibacy, social seclusion, and physical deprivation. These religious practices were ultimately intended to gain freedom from rebirth after death, which was to be accomplished by the accrual of karma, the benefit received from making the proper sacrifices. However, at the time of Siddhartha's life and teaching, they represented the practices of the dominant folk religion of "the people of the woods"<sup>4</sup>—holy men who had withdrawn from society to live solitary ascetic lives devoted to pious ritual and practices. Many of these Brahminic beliefs and practices would eventually be codified into the Hindu religion. His teachings were never dogmatic, and he constantly advised his disciples to "work diligently. Be lights for one another. Take no sanctuary from the outside world. Do not look for someone else's refusal. Hold on to the truth like you would a light." <sup>5</sup>

Three fundamental elements may be recognised in Buddhist practice. These include cultivating a moral way of life guided by a solid ethical code; joining a community, or Sangha, where one fulfils one's social obligations; and mastering mindfulness practices such as meditation, chanting, or enlightenment. It should be obvious that Buddhism's central tenet is the removal of pain and sorrow from the world. Therefore, it is important to focus on making as many people as possible happy with one's thoughts, words, and actions. This is a natural ethics that develops out of one's awareness of the pain of others; it is not an ethics that is characterised by rituals and obligations.

It gets the impression that when people are not much interested in religion they also neglect values like compassion, a sense of sharing, a sense of caring- all the things that people consider to be a religious message and reject. That's a mistake. These are secular ethics, not a religious message, and they are for everyone. Everyone can understand that being human, you want a happy life, a happy family, and to be a happy individual. But material things will not provide you with genuine inner peace or inner happiness. Human values are essential. We must find a way to present basic human values to everyone- and present them not as religious matters but as secular ethics that are essential whether you are religious or not.<sup>6</sup>(Dalai Lama, 2001, p. 57)

All Buddhist religious systems are clearly driven by a desire to cultivate compassion and loving kindness towards all beings. This extends to one's conduct towards and obligations to the other Sangha members in one's community. This is the foundation of Buddhism.

### **A Brief Sketch of Buddhism in North East India**

Everyone is aware that Buddha began to teach nonviolence and peace in India after attaining enlightenment. He was able to capture the hearts and minds of people in both India

and the surrounding foreign countries with his message of peace. Buddhism adopted its new aesthetic in every place, naturally within the main Hinayana and Mahayana subgroups. Buddhism with Sakta components, known as Vajrayana, became particularly well-liked among the masses. This kind of Buddhism, which has a large number of Sakta gods and goddesses, became so well-liked that it spread to Bhutan and north-east India. However, Hinayana Buddhism in its "Theravada" forms arrived in North East India much later, via Myanmar. Votive stupas at Sri Surya Pahar in Assam on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra tell of the early phase of Buddhism, or Hinayana Buddhism, which entered this region through Bengal, which is now Bangladesh.<sup>7</sup> The Buddhist stupas that may be seen in Pillak and Baxanagar in Tripura, as well as in Bhaibari in the Garo Hill area of Meghalaya, arrived in Tripura and Meghalaya via the same path in the beginning.

It is noteworthy that the Mahayana branch of Buddhism made its way into Sikkim, the smallest state in north-eastern India, which is bordered by China on the north, Bhutan to the east, Nepal to the west, and the State of West Bengal on the south.<sup>8</sup> The first group of individuals to be referred to as indigenous people was the Lepchas.<sup>9</sup> They make up the bulk of the population. Then come the Bhutias and the Nepalis. The indigenous tribe known as Lepchas subsequently embraced Buddhism. While the Nepalis are Hindu, the Lepchas and Bhutias are Buddhist. Tibet, which is located immediately to the north of Sikkim, gave Buddhism in Tantric form to Sikkim. This state did not get any influence from India on the Mahayana branch of Buddhism.

The Vajrayana school of Buddhism, which incorporates Tantric elements, spread into the neighbouring North-East Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. Both Vajrayana and Hinayana Buddhism are practised in Arunachal Pradesh. Due to its proximity to Bhutan, the Kameng area of Arunachal Pradesh was a possible entry point for the Vajrayana school of Buddhism. Tawang developed into a significant Buddhist hub under the rule of the Monpas in Arunachal Pradesh. The Tawang Monastery, located in a tiny settlement, is now thought to be the largest monastery in North East India.<sup>10</sup> The Monpas, who live in Kameng and who adopted Buddhism, were able to build a number of shrines and religious institutions and make a variety of Buddhist-related items. The Sherdukpens, like the Monpas, embraced Buddhism.

Some tribes that practiced Buddhism travelled from Myanmar to Assam in the late mediaeval era. These include the Itonia or Ioton, the Nara, the Turung, the Shyam, the Khamties, and the Phankiya. More potent khamtis were among these. They are all members of the powerful Tai race. The Assamese Ahoms<sup>12</sup> and the Khamtis are quite similar, although the Khamtis arrived in Assam much later. The Sadiya range, in the northeastern portion of undivided Assam, was inhabited by Khamtis. The bulk of its Buddhist institutions are now located in Arunachal Pradesh's Tirap district, with a few others scattered around upper Assam.

### Buddhism in Arunachal Pradesh

Arunachal Pradesh is fortunate to have a Buddhist cultural heritage in abundance. Here, Buddhism is a living religion. The migration of Khamtis brought the religion to the eastern part of Arunachal Pradesh. The Singphos and the Tikhak sub-tribes of Tangsa later adopted Buddhism. The remains of a pagoda at Miao and at Vijoynagar in Changlang district and the famous Tawang monastery testify that Buddhism was in practice in this part of the state for centuries. There are still a few Theravada Buddhist monasteries in the districts of Lohit and Changlang on Arunachal's eastern border. The Chowkham monastery, possibly dating from the beginning of the 19th century, is the biggest monastery in the area. In Arunachal Pradesh, both forms of Buddhism are in practice. The Khamtis, Singphos, and Tikhak sub-tribe of Tangsas living in the eastern part of the state profess Theravada Buddhism.<sup>13</sup> However, the Mompas, Sherdukpens, Membas, Khambas, Meyor, and Zakhring believe in Mahayana Buddhism.

### Buddhism in Assam

Assam is a north-eastern state situated on the periphery of India. From time immemorial, the state has absorbed multiple and diverse cultures, religions, and linguistic groups into its fold. People from varied regions have migrated into this state across different time periods. These variations provide a rich culture. The history of Buddhism is very old in Assam. The history of Buddhism is very old in Assam. Buddhism is a religion that has added to the multi-cultural fabric of Assam. We do not know clearly when Buddhism became popular in the north-east of India, but we know in certain terms that from the early historical period, Buddhism was popular in Assam. The accounts of Chinese traveller Hien-Tshang mention the popularity of Buddhism in Pragjyotishpur during the reign of Kumar Bhaskar Varman.

There are two basic forms of Buddhism that are present in this region. P. C. Choudhury mentioned that the Buddhist remains of Assam are associated with Mahayana and Vajrayana forms.<sup>14</sup> Again, the Sahajiyana form of Buddhism has a stronghold in some parts of Assam. According to the 2011 census of India, there is only 0.18% of the of the Buddhist population in Assam. The majority of them belong to Tai races<sup>15</sup> (Tai Khamti, Tai Khamyang, Tai Aitons, Tai Phake, and Tai Turung). It is important to mention here that Assam too has not seen major growth in Buddhism in the state. It is chiefly because the royal families were neither involved nor actively participated in popularising the religion. With the passage of time, Assam, together with different parts of the main land of India, witnessed a striking decline in Buddhism. Presently, only some social groups follow this religion in the state.

Buddhism in Manipur has never been well developed, in spite of its geographical proximity to Myanmar. The state has recently seen the discovery of a number of Buddhist statues. Manipur, in the past, had been one of the trade routes between the East and the West.<sup>29</sup> groups of tribes inhabit Manipur, which is 28% of the total state population. Among the six religions of the state (Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Jain, and Buddhism), Buddhism was shown as having the lowest



population according to the census year 1961–1971. 16 But the elements of Buddhism were found far and wide in the hills and valley of Manipur long before the advent of Hinduism. The epic narrative of Khamba and Thoibi, the folk tale of a boy who became king of Burma, and the and the Mitay chronicle of Nongpok Haaram (a record of the migration of people from the east), to mention a few, are examples of the close relationship between the people of the two sides. A large number of people of Shan origin have migrated in the past. Saikyamuni, or Buddha, is known as Kawtumuni (Gautam Muni) in Manipur. It is a term familiar to the common people of Manipur before the advent of Hinduism (c. 17th century).

### **Buddhism in Mizoram**

The Mizoram is the Christian-dominated state of north-east India. The Mizos had their own religion—a mixture of animistic beliefs and a consciousness of the Supreme God (Pathian), who is the God of the entire universe. In Mizoram, there are 14 ethnic groups. Among the 14 ethnic groups, viz., the Lusei (Sailo clan) occupied the nearest area of Mizoram, Aizawl, and Lungle districts; the northern periphery was inhabited by the weaker groups, Old Kuki, Hmars (north and north-east); and the Riangs had a noticeable concentration in the areas bordering Tripura (north-west strip). In the southern district of Chhintui, there is a predominance of certain tribes in specific areas: 1. Lakher-Tuipang Community Development Block. 2. Pawi-Sangau and Lawngtlai CD Blocks. And 3. Chakma, a south-western strip bordering Bangladesh, Chawngte Block, and the Demagiri area. 17 The numerical strength of these three is negligible in the socio-economic life of Mizoram. Among them, the Chakma tribal are followers of orthodox Buddhism.

### **Buddhism in Tripura**

Tripura is a tiny state belonging to the group of seven sisters surrounded by Bangladesh. The major tribes of Tripura are Triperah, Reang, Kuki, Lushai, Halam, Jamata, Noatia, Mog, Chakma, Baruah, and Uchai. This state has a rich cultural and religious background. A small percentage of the tribal people profess Buddhism. The large majority of tribes in this state remain within the Hindu fold. Buddhism is practiced by about 10% of tribals. According to scholars, Buddhism spread to Tripura as early as the days of Ashoka. 18 The Gunaighar Copper Plate inscription seems to indicate that Buddhism flourished here around 507–508 A.D. Buddhism may be regarded as a traditional religion of the tribals of Tripura. Among the various tribes of Tripura, the Mogs and Chakmas are the main adherents to Buddhism. The total number of Chakmas and Mogs gives us the total number of Buddhists. Both the Chakma and Mog people practiced Theravada Buddhism. 19

### **Buddhism in Sikkim**

Sikkim comprises different ethnic communities broadly classified as the Lepcha, Bhutia, Nepali, and Indian Plainsmen. Among them, Lepchas are the major population in the region who are followers of Buddhism. 20 Though the Buddhist population in the state of Sikkim is a minority, its contribution is unique among the social and cultural activities among the people of this region. The lifestyle of the tribal people in the state is the result of the influence of Buddhism on the local

people. Simplicity in dress and ornaments, socio-economic life, etc. are part of Buddhist influence. Though most of the tribal and non-tribal people may not be direct followers of the Buddhist faith, they are influenced by the teachings of the Buddha.

Buddhism in Nagaland and Meghalaya

Meghalaya and Nagaland are mostly Christian-dominated states in northeast India. Nagaland is inhabited by 16 major tribes, along with a number of sub-tribes. Each tribe is distinct and unique in character in terms of customs, language, and attire. It is noticeable that Buddhist people are very few in this state in comparison to the other states of North East India. There is substantial evidence to say that only 0.34% of Naga people were Buddhist followers. On the other hand, Meghalaya also has fewer Buddhist followers because this state is widely Christian-dominated. Buddhism had set its roots in Meghalaya (Shilong) in 1918, and through it, it spread very slowly. It is important to mention here that, like Nagaland, Meghalaya also has only 0.33% of Buddhist followers.

### **Religious Beliefs and Practices of Buddhism**

The study of human beings cannot be fully understood in the absence of religious beliefs and practices. All civilisations have beliefs that fall under the category of religion. These ideas differ from one culture to another. Any attitude, system of beliefs, or set of practices involving a supernatural force can be categorised as a religion. It is the pursuit of ultimate knowledge, which is uncontrollable by people. In all communities, these pursuits of ultimate truth assume the shape of religion. It is possible to think of belief in supernatural religion as a mental attitude. This mentality is reflected in the beliefs, rites, and rituals that are practiced. The terms “rite” and “ritual” are interchangeable and refer to a conventional way of behaving that reflects implicit beliefs, ideas, attitudes, and feelings. Ritual is a human institution that unites individuals on special occasions, but rituals also model the ideal human attitude in everyday interactions.

When a person considers something true even when he is unsure and unable to validate it, that person is said to be in a state of belief. Everyone has their own set of beliefs about the world they live in and the life they lead. A mutually supporting belief system is the religious one. The term “religious belief system” (which need not be religious; it might alternatively refer to something else entirely) refers to the collective or community’s shared set of beliefs. Some intellectuals contend that religious ideas are the philosophical frameworks that link people to spirituality. “Religion is a collection of cultural systems, worldviews, and philosophical frameworks that connect humans to spirituality and occasionally to moral principles. Numerous faiths have holy histories, symbols, myths, and traditions that are meant to explain the purpose of life or the world.”<sup>21</sup>

The intellectual world respects Buddhism as a religion and as a moral way of life. It is a wholly pragmatic form of religion. It does not have a belief in God like other faiths. Religion and culture are closely related to one another. Religion would not survive very long without cultural practice. Religious belief can occasionally influence how a region’s cultural life

develops. Buddhism has a significant impact on many facets of North-East India's cultural life. According to L.M. Joshi, who portrayed Buddhism as a distinct cultural form from Hinduism, "originally peculiar to the Sramanic tradition, moral and ascetic ideas, religious practices and institutions, art and literature, education, and learning, inspired by the teaching of Sakyamuni Buddha, constitute what has been referred to as the Buddhist Culture." 22 He continues by saying that Vedic Brahmanism and Buddhism's absorption process resulted in Buddhist culture being "the dominant strand of Indian culture" and Puranic Hinduism's growth. 23 According to some reports, Buddhist principles and ideas have ingrained themselves into modern Hindus' most fundamental religious beliefs as well as their whole system of religious and philosophical thought. 24

Tantricism, a prominent cultural tendency throughout the development of pre-Puranic Hinduism, is a religious part of Buddhist practices that has contributed to the cultural life of this north-eastern area of India. The main aspects of religion that the Buddhist influence on North East India's worship and ritual forms. Myths, rituals, beliefs, theology, mystic experience, socio-ethical content, etc. are a few other aspects of religion. All of these factors were affected by Buddhist practices, which eventually led to North East India's dominant religious tradition. Buddhism has an impact on many aspects of regional socio-cultural life, not just the rites and rituals. This includes philosophical speculation, art, architecture, language, and literature.

Buddhist tantrics helped the indigenous people's religions and the traditional Brahminical order in north-east India, particularly in Assam. The three main sectarian branches of Hinduism in this area were not the only cult practices that were impacted by Buddhist rituals and practices. During the formation of the Vajrayana, devotees of Buddhism and Hinduism freely exchanged deities. 25 The region's population's behavioural patterns are greatly influenced by beliefs in and practices of magic and tantra. Similar to the practices of the Kalacakra tantra, a tantra with Buddhist roots, there is a religious practice called Ratikhowa, or Bhitar seva. This practice has a connection to the Mishong culture, which they associate with Kalasamahati. 26

Buddhists hold the view that when a person passes away, both their bodily and spiritual selves merge with the soil. Following a death, the villagers go through a number of ceremonies and rituals to completely deny the presence of the deceased. The many Buddhist groups in north-east India adhere to the law of karma. According to Buddha, "Karma" is an action, and "Vipaka" is a fruit. Rebirth is a necessary result of karma. Future karma, which is founded in ignorance, is what causes birth, death, and rebirth. Previous karma conditions the present birth, and present karma is in condition with previous karma. They have a fervent conviction in the "Kumpa" notion of man's rebirth. 27

It would be impossible for a Buddhist to envision Buddhism without the Buddha image. The tradition of creating Buddha pictures began 500 years after his death. They believe that the shrine image of the Buddha, who represents love, kindness,

purity, and perfection, may aid us in overcoming any challenges, concerns, or misunderstandings that may arise as we go about our daily lives in a chaotic world. Each household is required to have a khing-lik (temple) where they can worship Buddha. The Buddhists also conduct twice-daily Buddha worship in their own homes. 'Tangsom' is the name of the thing. Two words, Tang and Som, make up Tangsom. Tang is an offering, while Som is food. In Pali, it refers to serving food to the Lord Buddha. The Turung People refer to the evening puja offering as "Lu-Nam-LuSimi." 'Lu' means 'offer,' 'Nam' means 'water,' and 'Simi' means 'candle. It denotes that they present water along with a lit candle in the Buddha's honour. 28

Fasting is a fundamental and essential part of Buddhist religious practice. North-East Indian Buddhists firmly believe that the Buddha is a superhuman being whose wisdom surpasses that of the Sun and the Moon. "We pray that we may enjoy Nirvana and the higher abode as a result of worshipping the Buddha," they say in their prayer. "We possess name and form; therefore, we offer water, flowers, and candles unto the water for cleaning and drinking, flowers, and candles for whatever Thou mayest desire." is the phrase used to accompany the offering of flowers, candles, and water.

The annual practice of showering the statue of Lord Buddha is known as the poi Changken pani Bihu, or water sprinkling festival. The terms Poi and Changken are combined to form the Tai word Poi Changken. Changken means to shower water, and Poin signifies a festival. 29

The numerous Buddhist groups in North-East India observe the five precepts (Pacaila) in general as followers of Buddhism. However, the elderly also adhere to the eight principles (Astasila). In religious activities, the monk or Vante is in charge of these people. Monks hold a highly respected position in society. Their companion, mentor, and philosopher are the monks. The peasants recite the sila once the monk has finished. Although they are Tai, Pali is their sacred language. 30 They revere Buddha twice a day in their home, and they constantly honour the three Ratnas of Buddhism—Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha.

Theravada Buddhism lays forth a number of commandments (sila) for its adherents to abide by. The peasants occasionally get these commandments from the monk. The Sila is recited by the monk and then three times by the people. In addition to Pacasila, the monk and elderly couple watch Astasila and Dasasila. Pacasila is for the average person; Astasila is for the elderly; and Dasasila is for the monk. They employ Pali in all of their religious activities.

## CONCLUSION

There are several indigenous (tribal) communities in India's north-eastern area. In north-east India, tribal people make up the bulk of the population. The villages each have their own unique customs, cultures, and religious beliefs. Buddhism is the faith that ties together the relationships between the mind, body, and spirit. The very natural rule of karma serves as its foundation. As a result, there is scientific support for Buddhism. It is also

accepted by modern science. For the contemporary world, it is timeless. Buddhists held the belief that Buddha came to earth to illuminate the righteous way, obliterate the wrong road, and dispel sorrow. As a result, the research above sheds light on the practices of Indian religion, primarily Buddhism, among those in North East India, particularly in Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and Tripura.

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